



**Barry Lawrence Ruderman
Antique Maps Inc.**

7407 La Jolla Boulevard
La Jolla, CA 92037

www.RareMaps.com

(858) 551-8500
blr@RareMaps.com

**Carte Du Detroit De Malacca (Partie Sud) Depuis Les North Sands Jusqu'a Singapour;
d'apres M.M. Wm. Rose, Roberts Moeresby et C.Y. Ward . . . 1862**

Stock#: 38328
Map Maker: Depot de la Marine
Date: 1862
Place: Paris
Color: Uncolored
Condition: VG
Size: 34.5 x 23.5 inches
Price: \$1,400.00



Description:

A rare large-format 1860s sea chart of the southern part of the Straits of Malacca, including Singapore Island, published by the French Dépôt de la Marine.

This highly detailed sea chart embraces the Straits of Malacca from a point just north of Selangor, Malaysia, all the way south, past Singapore, to Batam Island, Indonesia. Notably, the chart includes Malacca and almost the entirety of Singapore Island. The quality of the lithography employed by the Dépôt de la Marine is exceptionally fine and the chart features copious hydrographic information, including bathymetric soundings, shoals, channels, light houses (heightened in red and yellow), annotated sailing details and a host of other intelligence. A key at the bottom left translates important words from Malay to French.

The Straits of Malacca were then, as they still are now, the busiest shipping lanes in Asia, and charts of the passage were of the utmost importance. The route was especially consequential for the British as the straits were the gateway between India and the Far East, including their key base at Hong Kong. Britain, who held suzerainty over the Malay Peninsula since 1806, also required access to the key ports of Singapore and Malacca.

At the time that this chart was made, Singapore was just over 40 years old, having been founded in 1819 by Sir Stamford Raffles. It had overtaken Georgetown (Penang, Malaysia) to become the most important British center in Southeast Asia and was a rapidly growing commercial and naval port. It would shortly be made (in 1867) the capital of the newly formed Crown colony of the Straits Settlements (consisting of large coastal portions of the Malay Peninsula). Yet, in spite of its importance, the entire island of



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Singapore had a population of only around 80,000.

The genealogy of the present chart is interesting. Up to 1840, the authoritative sea chart of the Malacca Straits was William Heather's, *A New Chart of the Straits of Malacca...* (London, 1803), that subsequently ran into various editions published by J.W. Norrie. While impressive by circa 1800 standards, mariners soon realized that it contained many deficiencies and omissions.

From around 1815, the British Royal Navy sent out surveying teams to chart various aspects of the straits. The Strait of Calam was surveyed by Captain William F. Owen in 1817. The Arroa Islands and the North Sands (off the coasts near Selangor) were surveyed by Captain Donald Ross in 1819, while the Coast of Sumatra was charted by Lieutenants W. Rose and R. Moresby. Further touch up surveys of the Sumatran coast were undertaken by the crew of the *HMS Harrier* in 1834. These various surveys were compiled by the eminent hydrographer James Horsburgh (1762-1836), shortly before he died. The revised chart was published in two different issues by the British Admiralty as *The Strait of Malacca. Western part.* (1840) and *Malacca Strait: the Arroa Islands with the North Sands and Calam Strait* (1840).

The French, who had increasingly consequential interests in Indochina, made heavy use of the Straits of Malacca. The French Dépôt de la Marine published a chart closely based on the Admiralty charts, *Carte du Détroit de Malacca. Partie méridionale comprenant depuis le Mont Parcelar jusqu'à Singapoure* (1843). The present chart is a revised and improved edition of this chart, issued by the Dépôt in 1862. This series of charts of the straits would not be superseded until the publication of James Imray's *Straits of Malacca, Singapore, Rhio & c.* (1882).

The present chart is rare. We are aware of no other examples appearing on the market during the last 25 years and can locate only a single institutional example, at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France.

Detailed Condition: